



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jan. 17, 2008

For immediate release

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DNR, IDALS OFFERING GRANTS FOR IMPROVING WATER QUALITY WITH WATERSHED PROJECTS

***NOTE TO EDITORS:** The following is a joint news release from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.*

MEDIA CONTACT: Steve Hopkins, DNR watershed improvement coordinator, at (515) 281-6402 or Stephen.Hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov ; Tess Capps, IDALS Communications Specialist, at (515) 281-8606 or Tess.Capps@idals.state.ia.us.

DES MOINES — The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) are encouraging groups across the state to apply for grant funding to help improve Iowa's water quality.

Watershed and water quality improvement grants from DNR and IDALS' Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) allow groups, such as Soil and Water Conservation Districts and other organizations, to create watershed projects. Watershed and water quality projects help individual Iowans make changes on the land in order to improve the quality of water entering our rivers, streams and lakes.

“We’ve seen many Iowans use these watershed and water quality improvement grants and make a lot of progress in improving our state’s lakes, rivers and streams,” said Bill Ehm, the DNR’s Water Policy Coordinator. “We’re encouraging new groups to apply for our grants and continue that effort. Iowans have worked hard to improve our water, and there’s still work to do.”

“Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts can help individual landowners, organizations, and towns address watersheds and improve water quality issues through project grants,” said Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey. “These funds can offer support technically and financially to address water quality issues.”

In a joint application process, Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Districts can apply for funding from DNR Section 319, and/or the Water Protection Fund (WPF) and the Watershed Protection Fund (WSPF) from IDALS-DSC. Other groups and organizations are invited to apply for Section 319 funding through the DNR.

The DNR is able to provide these grants annually through funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The grants, made possible through Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act, are often called “Section 319 Grants” and currently fund about 50 projects in Iowa. The IDALS-DSC is able to provide grants annually through funding from the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program and the state’s Environment First Fund. Currently, 71 watershed and water quality projects in 66 Soil and Water Conservation Districts are supported by these funds.

The deadline for applications for fiscal year 2008 grants is April 1, 2008.

Groups considering applying for a grant can contact Steve Hopkins, DNR watershed improvement coordinator, at (515) 281-6402 with questions and for one-on-one assistance regarding Section 319 grants. Those with questions about WPF or WSPF funding can contact Jim Gillespie, IDALS Field Services Bureau Chief at (515) 281-7043.

More information on grants and watershed improvement is available on the DNR’s Web site at <http://watershed.iowadnr.gov> or the IDALS-DSC Web site at <http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/waterprojdev.htm>.

Writer: Jessie Brown

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ANNUAL RIVER CLEANUP ROUTE AND DATES ANNOUNCED

MEDIA CONTACT: Jackie Gautsch, DNR, at (319) 335-1761.

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is looking for adventuresome volunteers to take part in the sixth annual Project AWARE (A Watershed

Awareness River Expedition) river cleanup and water quality monitoring initiative.

This year's river cleanup expedition will tackle about 87 miles of the Winnebago, Shell Rock and Cedar rivers from June 14 to 21. The route will launch from Mason City and float through Rockford, Marble Rock, Greene, Clarksville and Shell Rock before landing in Cedar Falls. Volunteers participate by floating the river in a kayak or canoe and cleaning up river trash along the way. While the expedition lasts an entire week, volunteers may stay and help for as little or as long as they like.

Project AWARE combines river cleanup, recreation and education into a meaningful and rewarding experience for volunteers. Past participants have said that AWARE is one of the greatest ways for someone to connect with nature and make a difference in protecting it.

In the five-year history of Project AWARE, the expedition has sported an impressive track record, enlisting 863 participants who have cleaned up more than 400 river miles and four different lakes, and removed 1,000 cubic yards of trash, of which 85 percent was recycled. Volunteers have also restored native prairie, renovated trails and enhanced recreational areas.

While the work can be tough and dirty, the expedition is really one of a kind.

"It's a lot of fun. The people are amazing. When you can get people to take a vacation just to pick up trash, that's something," said Don Propst, a Project AWARE veteran.

Project AWARE is an initiative of the DNR's IOWATER, Water Trails and Keepers of the Land programs.

For more information on this event and to download the registration materials, please visit www.iowaprojectaware.com or contact Project AWARE by email at iowater@iowater.net or phone Jackie Gautsch at (319) 335-1761.

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DNR INVESTIGATES FUEL OIL RELEASE IN MARSHALLTOWN

MEDIA CONTACTS: Bill Gross or Chuck Furrey at (515) 725-0218.

MARSHALLTOWN – The smell of fuel oil late Tuesday night alerted a city employee that fuel oil was entering the Marshalltown wastewater treatment plant.

Wednesday morning, the city traced the fuel oil to the demolition of the closed Arbie Mineral Feeds facility south of downtown.

A contractor with S. L. Baumeier Construction was tearing down the facility and uncovered a partially filled 9,000 gallon underground storage tank at about 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday. Treatment plant officials think the fuel oil began entering the plant around 8 p.m., but it was not detected until midnight.

Plant operators diverted the incoming wastewater and fuel to a holding basin to prevent damage to the plant and to keep it from reaching the Iowa River.

“The city treatment operators did an excellent job of handling this situation,” said Charles Furrey, an environmental specialist with the DNR’s Des Moines field office. “They were able to divert incoming wastewater and use a standby system to minimize effects on the treatment plant and keep fuel out of the river.

“They also used high tech mapping, interviews with fuel suppliers and in-line television of the sewer system to find the location of the problem,” he added.

Preliminary investigations by the city Wednesday morning indicate that about 3,500 gallons of fuel were released. The fuel reached the wastewater treatment plant through a leaky joint in an underground sewer line that lies underneath the tank.

“The good news for citizens is that we have not received any reports of vapors in the sewers,” said Kathleen Lee with the DNR’s emergency response unit.

Lee added that people doing construction work should contact the DNR as soon as possible when there is a leak or potential release of hazardous materials.

“Not only are contractors required to report these incidents within six hours or less, in this case it’s likely that less oil would have reached the city’s treatment plant if this had been called in on time,” she added.

The incident was not reported to the DNR until late Wednesday morning. The DNR is requiring removal and proper clean up of the underground storage tank. The fuel will be held in the treatment plant’s holding basin until later this spring.

City officials reported the treatment plant was fully operational Thursday morning.

There was no visible evidence Wednesday that petroleum products were reaching the Iowa River according to city personnel. The DNR was checking the river on Thursday.

The DNR will consider appropriate enforcement action upon completion of the investigation.

Writer: Karen Grimes

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70 COUNTIES DECIDE TO EVALUATE ANIMAL CONFINEMENT SITES

MEDIA CONTACT: Tammie Krausman, DNR, at (515) 281-8382.

DES MOINES – Almost three fourths of Iowa counties have decided to use the master matrix to evaluate the proposed locations of animal confinement operations that need to apply for a construction permit.

Animal producers in counties that file the resolutions must meet higher standards than other confinement operations with a construction permit. They must earn points on the master matrix by choosing a site and using practices that reduce impacts on the environment and the community.

The following 70 counties have adopted resolutions to use the matrix as of Jan. 16: Adair, Adams, Appanoose, Audubon, Benton, Black Hawk, Boone, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Calhoun, Carroll, Cass, Cedar, Cerro Gordo, Cherokee, Clinton, Crawford, Dallas, Davis, Delaware, Des Moines, Dickinson, Dubuque, Emmet, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Greene, Grundy, Guthrie, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Howard, Humboldt, Ida, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Jones, Kossuth, Linn, Louisa, Lucas, Lyon, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Mitchell, Monona, Monroe, Montgomery, Muscatine, Obrien, Page, Pocahontas, Poweshiek, Ringgold, Shelby, Sioux, Tama, Taylor, Wayne, Webster, Winnebago, Winneshiek, Woodbury, Worth and Wright counties.

Counties that adopt the master matrix can provide input on site selection, and the type of structures and facility management that is being proposed.

The deadline for enrolling in the program is Jan. 31 for counties interested in using the matrix during the next 12 months.

Producers and citizens can obtain more information and view a map of participating counties at www.iowadnr.gov/afo/matrix.html.

Only those producers who must get a construction permit are affected by the matrix.

Writer: Karen Grimes

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PUBLIC ASKED TO ATTEND MEETING ON IMPROVING EAST LAKE OSCEOLA

MEDIA CONTACT: Chris Van Gorp, DNR, at (515) 281-4791.

OSCEOLA – Iowans interested in improving East Lake Osceola in Clarke County can attend a public meeting and review a DNR improvement plan for the stream.

The DNR has developed a water quality improvement plan for East Lake Osceola, which is on the state's impaired waters list because of excessive algae growth, which impacts recreation uses of the lake and aquatic life.

The DNR will ask Iowans for their input on the improvement plan at a Jan. 29 meeting in Osceola. The meeting will take place at 1:30 p.m. at the American State Bank, 1000 Jeffries Drive. Attendees are asked to use the south entrance.

"We'd like to hear people's comments on the plan and help them to use the plan to improve East Lake Osceola," said Chris Van Gorp with the DNR's Watershed Improvement section.

Those not able to attend the public meeting can receive more information at www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/tmdl/ and submit comments on the plan (by Feb. 18) via the following ways:

E-mail: chris.vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov

Telephone: Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791

Mail: Chris Van Gorp, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319

The DNR's water quality improvement plan, also called by its technical name of Total Maximum Daily Load, outlines the problems and potential solutions to the problems in East Lake Osceola. After gathering Iowans' comments, the DNR will forward the final plan to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval. Local groups interested in helping East Lake Osceola can then use the plan to assist their improvement efforts.

Writer: Jessie Brown